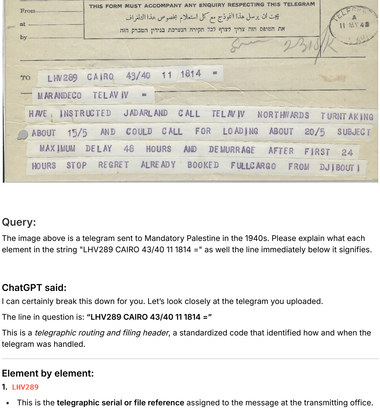
Citation

"Deciphering Telegram Codes from the 1930s and 1940s." *ChatGPT* (website). V. 5. Sept. 1, 2025.


P.T. 1007
PALESTINE POSTS, TELEGRAPHS & TELEPHONES.
TELEGRAM מברק تلغراف
Number 194
THIS FORM MUST ACCOMPANY ANY ENQUIRY RESPECTING THIS TELEGRAM
From
at
by
11 MY 43
LHV289 CAIRO 43/40 11 1814 =
MARANDECO TELAVIV =
HAVE INSTRUCTED JADARLAND CALL TELAVIV NORTHWARDS TURNITAKING
ABOUT 15/5 AND COULD CALL FOR LOADING ABOUT 20/5 SUBJECT
MAXIMUM DELAY 48 HOURS AND DEMURRAGE AFTER FIRST 24
HOURS STOP REGRET ALREADY BOOKED FULLCARGO FROM DJIBOUTI

Query:

The image above is a telegram sent to Mandatory Palestine in the 1940s. Please explain what each element in the string "LHV289 CAIRO 43/40 11 1814 =" as well the line immediately below it signifies.

ChatGPT said:

I can certainly break this down for you. Let's look closely at the telegram you uploaded.

The line in question is: **"LHV289 CAIRO 43/40 11 1814 ="**

This is a *telegraphic routing and filing header*, a standardized code that identified how and when the telegram was handled.

Element by element:

1. `LHV289`
   - This is the **telegraphic serial or file reference** assigned to the message at the transmitting office.
   - The three-letter prefix (`LHV`) is a code for the originating exchange circuit or office branch. (Each major city had multiple "circuits" identified by letters; British PTT telegraphy manuals are full of them.)
   - The trailing digits (`289`) are the **message number** sent that day (i.e., the 289th telegram issued on that circuit).
2. `CAIRO`
   - This indicates the **office of origin** where the telegram was handed in.
   - In this case: **Cairo Telegraph Office** (at the time under the Egyptian PTT, but directly connected to Palestine by cable and landline).
   - Including the office name in the header was mandatory when messages crossed borders.
3. `43/40`
   - This is the **year/month code or serial fraction** used in accounting between administrations.
   - In many Mandate telegrams of the 1930s–40s, you'll see pairs like this: the left number (`43`) is the **year** (1943), and the right (`40`) is an **internal route or rate code** used for inter-office settlement.
   - This allowed the Palestine PTT to bill Egypt (and vice versa) correctly.
4. `11`
   - This is the **day of the month** the telegram was accepted at the originating office — 11th of May.
   - It aligns with the round date-stamp on the form: **11 MY 43**.
5. `1814`
   - This is the **time of acceptance**, given in the 24-hour clock.
   - So the message was lodged at **18:14 hrs (6:14 PM)** on 11 May 1943.
6. `=`
   - Separator, marking the end of the routing header and the start of the address block.

The next line:

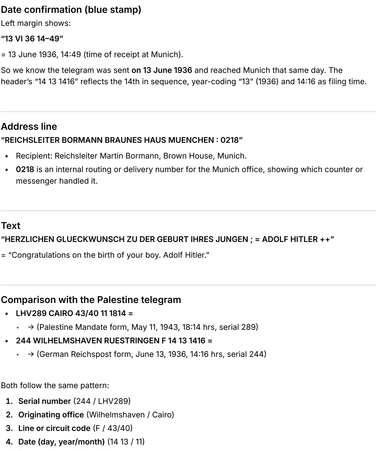
"MARANDECO TELAVIV ="

- This is the **address line**, showing who the telegram is for. Here, "MARANDECO" (a company name — perhaps short for *Maritime and Navigation Company*) in Tel Aviv.
- The "=" again acts as a separator, after which comes the telegram's main text.

✅ **Summary:** "LHV289 CAIRO 43/40 11 1814 =" tells us this telegram was filed at Cairo (serial no. 289) on **11 May 1943** at **18:14 hours**, via line/batch 40. The line below ("MARANDECO TELAVIV =") is the recipient's address.

ChatGPT said:

Would you like me to also map this against an equivalent German Reichspost example from the same era, so you can see how consistent the international telegraph "language" was?



Response:

Proceed. The file above is attached for reference.

ChatGPT said:

Perfect — thanks for adding the image. Let's line it up with the Palestine telegram you showed earlier, so you can see how both administrations followed a comparable "telegraph language," even if the codes differ slightly.

German Reichspost header (the second scan)

"244 WILHELMSHAVEN RUESTRINGEN F 14 13 1416 ="

Breaking it down:

- **244**
  - The **telegram serial number** at the originating office that day.
- **WILHELMSHAVEN RUESTRINGEN**
  - The **originating office** (here, Wilhelmshaven-Rüstringen).
- **F**
  - A **line or circuit designator**, like "LHV" in the Cairo example. Often a single letter indicated the transmission route or feeder line.
- **14**
  - 14 refers to the time of filing, given in 24-hour notation. So "14" means the telegram was handed in (or entered into the system) at 14:00 hours (2:00 p.m.) local time.
- **13**
  - 13 refers to the **day of the month** when the telegram was actually received at the Wilhelmshaven office (13 June 1936, confirmed by the date line "13.VI.36" printed below)
- **1416**
  - **14** refers to the **time of filing**, given in 24-hour notation. So "14" means the telegram was handed in (or entered into the system) at **14:00 hours (2:00 p.m.)** local time.
- **=**
  - Separator, marking the end of the filing string and the start of the address block.

Date confirmation (blue stamp)

Left margin shows:

"13 VI 36 14–49"

= 13 June 1936, 14:49 (time of receipt at Munich).

So we know the telegram was sent **on 13 June 1936** and reached Munich that same day. The header's "14 13 1416" reflects the 14th in sequence, year-coding "13" (1936) and 14:16 as filing time.

Address line

"REICHSLEITER BORMANN BRAUNES HAUS MUENCHEN : 0218"

- Recipient: Reichsleiter Martin Bormann, Brown House, Munich.
- **0218** is an internal routing or delivery number for the Munich office, showing which counter or messenger handled it.

Text

"HERZLICHEN GLUECKWUNSCH ZU DER GEBURT IHRES JUNGEN ; = ADOLF HITLER ++"

= "Congratulations on the birth of your boy. Adolf Hitler."

Comparison with the Palestine telegram

- **LHV289 CAIRO 43/40 11 1814 =**
  - → (Palestine Mandate form, May 11, 1943, 18:14 hrs, serial 289)
- **244 WILHELMSHAVEN RUESTRINGEN F 14 13 1416 =**
  - → (German Reichspost form, June 13, 1936, 14:16 hrs, serial 244)

Both follow the same pattern:

1. **Serial number** (244 / LHV289)
2. **Originating office** (Wilhelmshaven / Cairo)
3. **Line or circuit code** (F / 43/40)
4. **Date (day, year/month)** (14 13 / 11)
5. **Time of filing** (1416 / 1814)
6. **= separator**
7. **Address block**

✅ **Conclusion:** Both telegrams demonstrate the international telegraph standard: an origin code + serial, office name, routing/line code, filing date and time, and a separator before the recipient's address. The year of the Palestine telegram (1943) is verified by the British Mandate date stamp, while the German example (1936) is confirmed by the Reichspost's blue date entry.